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Ringtail rescue

Trapped raccoon freed.

Page 3

## Slow down New traffic laws in effect. Page 8



# INPORTANEWS

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### **Loving Canadian life**



MICHELLE ALLEMBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWOR

Belai Musa Agha and his wife Hiba El Khoury celebrate six months of living in Canada with their new extended family from St. James and St. Brendan Church, as well as staff from Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre. See full story on Page 2.

mily mem in lower level with walk nett Prime location



cut which locations are still available!





# **UPFRONT**

## **Refugees loving Canadian life in Port Colborne**

Postmedia netwrok A Syrian family is continu-

ing to make a quick adaptation to life in its new Port Col-It's been six months since

St. James and St. Brendan Church welcomed its first refugee family to the city. Church members have been helping Belal Musa

Agha, his wife Hiba El Khoury and their two children settle into Canadian life. Hiba said she and her family are settling in well and they love Port Colborne. She said they hope to get jobs in the city so they can keep liv-

ing there. Hiba and Belal's daughter Jana Musa Agha, 9, and son Fares Musa Agha, 4, enjoyed attending school and have made friends. Hiba said both children have settled in well and also want to stay in Port

"I'm very happy here, and Jana ... she said, 'Mom, I don't want to change my school, I love my teacher, I love my school.' I said, 'Yeah we will stay here." Hiba said emilina

organizer with the St. James and St. Brendan Church refugee committee, said Jana has had an easy time learning English.
"She just sits and talks, oh

because she is really good and Hiba is very, very good." Yakobowski said usually a translator from Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre will translate via

phone at appointments, but Hiba has managed without one. few things you know, I mean some pronunciation of some words, but she is excellent." Yakobowski said.



MICHELLE ALLENBERG/POSTMEDIA NETWORK Belal Musa Agha and his wife Hiba El Khoury celebrate six months of living in Canada with their new extended family from St. James and St. Brendan Church, as well as staff from Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre

Hiba said her daughter's now, and she is amazed how accent sounds Canadian quickly she has learned Eng-

Jana talk she can't believe it's her daughter speaking. "She speaks quickly and she eats some letters, it's

really quick." Hiba said with Hiba's English has also become so good she doesn't need a translator for most

Belal's English is still a work in progress, but the whole family has been attending ESL classes three

times a week Hiba said Belal has a job interview soon to work in a kitchen. She said her husband loves cooking and worked as a cook in Lebanon for three years. She said he wants to keep cooking and

hopes to work in a kitchen. During the past few months St. James and St. Brendan Church members have forged a bond with the refugees as if they were one

big family.
"In this short length of time they are friends now, you know, they are not the Syrian refugees that we brought over on Jan. 1. We feel like a familv." Yakobowski said as tears filled her eyes

process has been such a joy for her and other members of the church. She said the process hasn't felt like work at all, rather it's been an amazing experience.

The church, in partnership with Welland Heritage Council, organized a dinner last Saturday night to celebrate the end of Ramadan and the family's six months in Canada

Hiba, Belal and church members prepared authentic Syrian cuisine for about 60

Yakobowski said during preparation she could see Belal's love of cooking, that he was "in his element

"He had a smile on his face the whole time ... I think feeling good that he is doing this. He obviously loves to cook and he's got an outlet with this mini thing.

Yakobowski said the dinner was also a chance to say thank you to all the people who took the family to English classes, doctors appointments and assisting in other



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# **Crews rescue** raccoon

#### pactmedia natureli

A young raccoon is safe and sound, thanks to the teamwork of animal control officers with the Welland and District Humane Societv. the Welland fire department and city crews.

Officer John Hoadley said a call came in around 3 p.m. on Canada Day about a raccoon that had gotten its head stuck in a sewer grate near Chippawa Park. Last Thursday, the humane society shared a video of the rescue on its Facebook page

"We thought this was going to be quick," Hoadley said of their reaction when they arrived on scene. Instead, what they thought would be a quick rescue turned into a

90-minute venture. The video shows the raccoon with its head stuck in one of the grid holes of a large, square sewer grate. It was struggling to get itself unstuck and hanging on with its paws to avoid hang-ing just by its neck.

Hoadley said rescuing animals from grates is a common thing for them, especially ducklings that are small enough to fall through. But retrieving a raccoon was a lot more difficult than

they anticipated. Continued on Page 25



A young raccoon finds itself in a predicament on Canada Day as it got its head stuck in a sewer grate near Chippawa Park. Watch the rescue video online at www.wellandtribune.ca.



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welland.tribune@sunmedia.ca John Tobon, Group Advertising Director Peter Conradi, Managing Editor



## Climate change denial fueled by politics



Regular readers of this column will know

I am a science nerd Science remains our single-best method of understanding the universe, for discovering where our little mudball of a planet fits into the grander cosmos and for finding solutions that vex an increasingly complex

Science is particularly useful when faced with sprawling issues that extend beyond our local or even national borders. Poisoning due to leaded gasoline, diseases caused by smoking, and the spread of virulent dis-

eases like measles or polio and a host of others issues were solved by science. In many of these cases, there was public, political and commercial resistance to acting on what science was showing us. The more recent - and dare I say, irrational -

objections to vaccines aside, in every case public education played a key role in overcoming that resistance. As a result, policies were enacted that

improved and even saved lives One of the conceits of science nerds - one

shared by many actual scientists and philosophers - is that when faced with resistance rooted in ignorance or unwarranted skepticism, more education is the solution.

You see this approach in action today when dealing with climate change denial. Climate change is real. It's happening, and human activity is a major force driving

Despite the robust science, many people refuse to accept the reality of climate change and this resistance is the greatest hurdle to taking meaningful action.

Research released by Brock University last Wednesday, titled Barriers to Change: Climate Change Scepticism and Uncertainty in Canada, suggests pouring resources into public education might not be the answer

Biology researcher Gary Pickering recently conducted surveys to learn why some people are so skeptical about climate change. Going into the research, he assumed there would be a direct correlation between low education levels and climate change denial.

But there wasn't "Surprisingly, what we found was that your political leanings and values had more to do with climate change skepticism than education," Pickering said. "Many of the

reproduce them in print, electronic or other form.

There are a couple of interesting points to consider here.

Men were also more likely to reject climate As Canadians, we often like to look south of the 49th and scoff at the general ignorance of our gun-toting neighbours and their increasingly divisive and incendiary

education, but also tertiary education as

These people showed a grasp of what cli-

mate science says. But they reject it, Pick-

ering says, on political instead of scientific

political conservatives and those who live

in western Canada, particularly in oil-pro-

ducing provinces, were more likely to show

high levels of climate change skepticism.

Pickering found those who identified as

well!

grounds.

science than women

people who showed the highest levels of climate change skepticism were educated. We are not just talking primary and secondary

In the United States, you're more likely to reject climate science if you are a Republican and, conversely, more likely to accept if

you identify as a Democrat What Pickering has found is the right-left political divide on climate change is largely the same in Canada, ΩIdeology can trump scientific evidence, which in turn can stifle simple actions people can take in their

everyday lives, such as recycling, Pickering said. Soon to be published research conducted

by Pickering has found that political stigma has a particularly powerful impact on peo-

"This is a simple example, but if you live in a community that doesn't think recycling is important, you may not recycle," he said. "People are saying that social embarrassment is a particular concern when it comes to what action they will take.

Playing political games is inefficient and wastes time in dealing with a situation in

of our times

political zeitgeist, rather than relying on presenting the facts about climate change. urgent need of action. But it's still better than doing nothing.

How to mitigate climate change and how

Unfortunately, the public debate is not

best to adapt our lives to its reality is per-

haps the single greatest political challenge

about how to manage the crisis, but whether

it exists at all. I would say we are a bit like

Nero on his fiddle, blithely watching the

city burn. But it's worse than that. Many of

ering's research, however, suggests more

resources should be directed to change the

In a perfect world, a calm assessment of the facts is all that would be needed. Pick-

us are not convinced the flames are real.

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#### Wainfleet man sent to hospital after boating accident

A Wainfleet senior was in hospital after being forced to swim for about 90 minutes following a boating mishap. At about 9 a.m. last Sunday, a 67-year-old man from Wainfleet was fishing in Big Bay, west of Deseronto near Kingston, according to a news release. Around that time, one of the boat's motors fell from the vessel into about four metres of

water

The man dove into the water to retrieve the motor. but when he surfaced his boat had drifted away. The man swam for about 90 minutes before making his way to shore, where he was given a ride to his trailer on Snookies Road in

Tvendinaga Mohawk Territory He was later transported to hospital, where he remained in serious condition. The OPP are hoping to locate the man's 16-foot. blue-and-silver Princecraft fishing boat. Officers would also like to speak to the person who drove the man

from where he came ashore to Snookies Road. Police did not release the name of the Wainfleet man.



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From left, Wainfleet Mayor April Jeffs, NPCA chairman Bruce Timms and Angle Harry cut the ribbon at the trail dedication for the late Gord Harry

## **Trail honours Gord Harry**

Former Wainfleet mayor Gord Harry was honoured last Wednesday afternoon with the dedication of the Wainfleet Rail Trail in his memory The trail is part of the Trans Can-

ada Trail system which stretches across the country from coast to coast. Niagara Peninsula Conservation Authority NPCA) began work on the trail in 2007. Bruce Timms, chairman of the NPCA, said staff have worked to gradually

improve the trail, including adding a sign and benches "The recognition panel there really

highlights the contribution Gord Harry made to establishing the trail," Timms

Harry worked for the NPCA for 35 ears, from 1964 until he retired in 1999. Later he became a member of the board of directors and was elected as chairman of the board. He served as chairman from 2002 until 2006.

Harry was an alderman in Wainfleet from 1989 until 2000. He served as mayor from 2000 until 2006. Harry died in February 2007 after being diagnosed with cancer

Angie Harry said her husband bad a great passion for nature and conservation and would be honoured with the trail dedication

"He loved me, but he loved the conservation authority. He was so devoted to his job and what he believed in."

Angle said she is proud to know their children and grandchildren will be able to use the trail and remember Gord Harry

He loved me, but he loved the

conservation authority. He was so devoted to his job and what he believed in."

Angie Harry

for years to come The trail is located on Station Road in

Wainfleet. It is 14 kilometres long, connecting the Wainfleet Conservation Area. It passes near Long Beach, Morgan's Point and Wainfleet Bog Conservation Areas.

Carmen D'Angelo, chief administrative officer and secretary treasurer of NPCA, said there is lots of wildlife along the trail. "There's some species at risk here. including bats, the snake ... birds and native plants. There are some species at risk along the trail and for those who are trail enthusiasts they love this part of the

trail" he said Some animals to watch out for, which could cause an issue are ticks, the massasauga rattlesnake, which has been snotted in the Wainfleet Bog, and coyotes. D'Angelo said to just stay aware while

walking along the trails in the area. The Gord Harry Trail is a non-motorized trail to be enjoyed by hikers and bicycle riders.

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"Krista Blondin's portrayal and recreation of Janis Joplin is second to none in the tribute business. She successfully made it feel like a Janis Joplin concert was directly in front of you." -Andy Frost, Q107 Classic Rock













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# **LOCALNEWS**



CAA tow truck driver Jamey Townsend is photographed in his truck on the shoulder of the QEW during the OPP public awareness campaign for the new legislation Slow Down, Move Over.



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## Move left, move over or pay the price

JULIE JOCSAK Protroadia Naturak

Move left, and move over, Police were out last Thursday reminding drivers that new legislation requires vehicles to slow down and move over when passing stopped emergency vehicles,

including tow trucks "It's a \$490 fine and three demerit points for someone who doesn't slow down and move over. The legislation is very clear," said Set. Kerry Schmidt, of the OPP

highway safety division. When you approach a stopped vehicle, whether it is a tow truck with amber lights, emergency vehicle with red and blue lights, an MTO vehicle, a fire truck or an ambulance, all of those vehicles.

you have to slow down. "If there's a lane, move over," And slowing down doesn't mean just taking your foot off the gas and coasting by, he said. Slowing down means actually slowing

"He has a kilometre of visibility and doesn't think to move over said Schmidt, standing at the side of the OEW near the Victoria Avenue exit, watching a truck fly by and with an empty lane next to it but making no attempt to move

As trucks and cars whiz by mere feet from the parked tow truck and cruiser on the shoulder of the QEW, few vehicles slow down or move over with only the tow truck

present. Once the OPP cruiser pulls up, drivers start moving over.

"For the most part, we see a lot of people moving over but for tow trucks less so and people are still ignorant to the fact that they have to move over" said Schmidt. "Just have common courtesy

Even if it's not the law, just have some consideration for people. Even if it's not with a tow truck or emergency vehicle. Anyone changing a flat tire is scared half to death when they are sitting there." CAA tow truck driver Jamey Townsend, of Vineland, knows

that fear all too well. The 52-yearold has been driving a tow truck since he was 16. About a year and a half ago, his

truck was hit by a vehicle whose driver was texting, while he was changing a flat tire for a customer at Lake Street and the OEW.

"I was changing a tire ... and the customer came over to get these lug nuts from me," he said

I gave them to him and about a second later he grabbed hold of me and pushed me into the ditch and the lady that was texting on her phone hit the side of the tow truck and then smashed into the side of his car where I was work

"If he didn't move me, we would probably have been seriously burt or dead, one of the two. Townsend finds few motorists

move over or slow down when he is working on the side of the road. "People aren't moving over. I would say about 10 per cent move over out of 100," said Townsend. "It's few and far between, unless you have a police officer available. Then most of the people do move over, but for the amber lights they

The OPP were only issuing information about the new legislation last Thursday, and not handing out fines. The OPP will kick off the provincial campaign for Slow Down, Move Over on the Civic Holiday long weekend in August,

Continued on Page 17





## Infrared sensors being used to fight Wainfleet Bog fire

#### MICHELLE ALLENBERG Protroadia notwork

Firefighters from the Ministry of Natural Resources are still fighting a 6.4-hectare fire in the Wainfleet Bog Progress has been made in the bog since the fire was first discovered last

Tuesday afternoon. The fire has not grown in size. As of last Sunday afternoon, Michael Reles, spokesman for Niagara Peninsula

Conservation Authority, said firefighters are working on containing the fire by creating a 30-metre perimeter around the

Reles said there are two "deep burning sections" in the main area of the fire. He said the peat moss can be deep in some places, so firefighters will have to dig and hose those areas.

It's a complicated fire to put out." The ministry brought in infrared heat

sensors Tuesday to search for hot spots. Reles said it was hoped the fire would be upgraded to "under control" on Monday. There are four classifications for a forest fire: not under control, being held, under control, and out. As of Friday the

fire was classified as being held. The NPCA said the fire should take between seven and 10 days to extin-

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## 'They're heading straight at me'

LAURA BARTON Postmedia Network A multi-vehicle collision

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in Port Colborne last Tuesday afternoon left one man injured and another woman thankful she wasn't hurt.

nickup truck and a smaller hatchhack vehicle at the intersection of Fares and Nickel

Police believe the truck. travelling on Fares, went through the intersection and collided with the car driving on Nickel. After being hit, the car struck a parked vebicle, which struck another vehicle

parked in front of it. "One party was taken to hospital," said acting Sgt. Charles McCbesney of the Niagara Regional Police. Not sure of the severity of

his injuries at this point." Witnesses said the person taken to hospital was an older man who lives on Nickel Street. None knew his name, and police did not release identities of anyone involved in the crash.

McChesney said speed was probably a factor in the collision, considering the damage to the vehicles and the way

the cars ended up stopping. Nickel Street resident Holly Paguin said she isn't surprised, because people speed down Fares all the time and many don't stop at the sign.

She witnessed the collision from her apartment down the street and said a pedestrian was nearly struck.

"There was a lady gardening outside ... but she jumped out of the way just in time."

Paguin said. That woman, Marissa Mathis, said she bad come over to the house on the corner of the two streets to help her friend with gardening.

"I was on my hands and knees pulling weeds," she said. "I was pulling weeds and I hear a loud crashing noise. I look up and I see this enormous truck and car and there's smake from the tires

and they're heading straight at me." She said all she could do was get up and stand against the fence, because she was

too frightened to run. Once the cars stopped, however, she moved quickly. She said "instinct took over as she ran over to the vebicles to make sure the drivers

were alright. She said the truck driver appeared fine, but there was no response from the older man inside the car and be

was bleeding. "He kept trying to get up and I told him, 'No, don't stand up, don't stand up. Wait for the ambulance," she

Mathic said she was shak. ing the entire time.

Kathleen Haycock, Mathis's friend and the resident of the house, said she's thankful the cars were parked out

front and ended up protecting her property. McChesney said the police

investigation is ongoing.

ibarton@oostmedia.com



OTOS BY LAURA RARTON / POSTMENA NETWORK Firefighters clean up debris after a two-vehicle collision in Port Colborne that saw two parked cars also damaged and sent one man to hospital.



After a car and truck collided at Nickel Street and Fare Street in Port Colborne, the car hit a parked vehicle which in turn hit another parked vehicle.





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From left Kelly Senchoway, Tiana Senchoway, Jim Senchoway and Heidi Seehagel are pictured at a golf fundraiser at Long Beach Country Club for Heidi's nephew.

## Toddler recovering after riding mower accident

MICHELLE ALLENBERG Postmedia Network

More than 80 people attended a fundraiser last Sunday to help a Pelham toddler who suffered a tragic riding mower accident. Long Beach Country Club in Wainfleet

hosted a golf tournament with the help of Jim Senchoway and his wife Kelly. The money raised will go to the Seehagel family to assist three-year-old Jed Seehagel's Jed's aunt Heidi Seehagel, 26, attended

the fundraiser on behalf of her brother and sister-in-law. She said they couldn't attended because they are busy taking care of the boy Heidi said Jed is doing "really good"

and has moved to a rehabilitation centre in Toronto.

Money raised Sunday will help with rehabilitation costs and accommodation.

Heidi said the family has had to stay in

Toronto while led recovers Heidi said Jed lost his leg in the accident and will need a prosthetic. Rehabili-

tation will prepare him for when he starts using the artificial limb. Heidi said the accident hasn't affected

Jed too much and he's still a happy boy. "He's a little boy that still likes bugs,

trucks and helicopters," she said. On the night of May 19, Seehagel's father was cutting the lawn at his farm-

house when the accident happened. The 32-year-old father thought Jed was in the house, but he had in fact made his way outside and was following his father around the property.

Unaware his son was close behind him he reversed the riding mower coming into contact with Ied

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## 'Bone dry' conditions worry Niagara farmers

#### MARYANNE FIRTH Postmedia Network

'Rescue rains' are not yet on the way to save Niagara from

arid conditions. Despite a forecast that called for showers last Friday and Saturday, Environment Canada senior climatologist Dave Phillips says it will yield no more pared to what's needed in the

Lawns in Niagara will remain yellow, temperatures will stay high and public pools will remain packed for the foresee-

able future. It's an issue being seen across the province as areas of Ontario

"In the Niagara area it's par-

ticularly bone dry," Phillips said, adding in the past month the region has seen only 20 to 25 per cent of its average pre-

But it's not the dry weather alone that is posing a chal-

"double whammy" due to the consistently high temperatures pushing the mercury past 30°C,

he said. Most years, Niagara only has two to four of those high-heat days by this point in the summer. Instead, the region has seen about two weeks' worth.

for field crops, Irrigation is often "Every bead of moisture that exists in the ground or in the not an option. Schonberger vegetation is being sucked up by the atmosphere," Phillips

"It's that combination of very

warm temperatures and very

dry conditions, strong winds

and lots of sunshine that's just

drying everything out. It's not

"What we're going to see

over the next couple of days

is not the rescue rains that we

need," he said, adding Niagara

is about 100 millimetres shoot

where it should be for this time

the additional precipitation needed to offset this sum-

mer's continued above-aver-

age temperatures, which are

expected to stick around well

days, each with 20 to 25 mm

of rain, to even make a dent in

of rain that would ruin your

holidays. The kind where you'd

be playing Scrabble or video

games in a cabin or cottage,

where it's just day after day of

thing end very soon, ... These

little teasers of precipitation are

The dry conditions are taking

Joseph Schonberger, presi-

a toll on Niagara's agricultural

dent of the Niagara South Fed-

eration of Agriculture, said his

crops are nowhere near where

they should be for the time of

weeks and they're about four

inches high," he said of his sov-

beans. "It's starting to hurt."

"They've been in for about six

But Schonberger, with land

ust east of Welland, said he's

faring better than some other Niagara farmers he's snoken

with, thanks in part to sporadic

minor rainfalls being seen in

difference, he said, though he's

seen worse," he said, recall-

ing a season five or six years

ago when most of his crops "all

"If we catch a few lucky rains,

hoping for a downpour.

Every drop of rain makes a

It's dry out there, but I've

just not going to do it."

"We're not going to see this

"What you want is the kind

what's needed. Phillips said.

The region needs four or five

That does not account for

And relief is not in sight.

looking pretty

into August.

"You just hope the weather turns around and you carry

crop insurance that covers your losses, hopefully. It's all you can "You don't control the

weather, That's Farming 101." Phil Tregunno, chairman of the Ontario Tender Fruit Growers, said many of the farmers he represents benefit from the use of irrigation, which is "keeping

(crops) alive right now." But those watering systems come at a price.

"It becomes a high-cost crop if you have to do a lot of irrigat. ing," he said, as it "adds a lot of labour and definitely a lot of diesel to numn water Irrigation, which isn't used at

all some years, also means an issue with inconsistent watering, as some rows of produce are typically missed as a result, the owner of Tregunno Farms in Niagara-on-the-Lake said. He still has high hopes for

this year's crops which, save for the drought, have had "perfect conditions" to grow. High heat means flavourful fruit with high sugar content,

but dryness will affect the size of the produce if the lack of rain That's of particular concern

with the peach season right around the corner "This is a really critical time

right now. It's your final ripening time," Tregunno said. "If we get rain in the next seven to 10 days, it will really

boost up the tonnage. If rainfall doesn't come, it could mean a 10 to 20 per cent reduction in the crop, he added.

The situation is not yet dire for local grape farmers. "We do prefer a dry year, however, this is getting too dry now. We're looking for rain," said Matthias Oppenlaender, chair-

man of the board of directors for Grape Growers of Ontario Many grape growers use irrigation systems that have kept farms in "decent shape," but the dryness has been trouble for those without that benefit, he

"For people who can't irrigate, we need rain in July for sure. Everyone is looking to the

said

While grapes prefer dry, warm conditions, "balance is key," Oppenlaender said, add ing "adequate moisture" is required.



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withered and died." then it doesn't become an issue, But it's starting to get ugly out there' While heat is good for the crops, the lack of water is prob-

Because of the acreages used









From Page 20

#### Arrest made for Salvation Army robbery



LANDA BARTON/POSTVEDIA NETHORS

The Salvation Army Thrift Store closed its doors and posted an emegency closure sign after being robbed at knife-point last Tuesday.

An arrest has been made in the incident of Port Colborne's Salvation Army Thrift Store robbery last Tuesday Brian Templain, 33, of Port Colborne was taken into police custody and charged with robbery at the Clarence Street store. He is accused of robbing the thrift store

The robbery closed the store for the rest of the day as Niagara Regional Police investigated.

Templain was remanded into custody at a bail hearing Wednesday

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# **LOCALNEWS**



Sgt. Kerry Schmidt of the OPP Highway Safety Division stands by a cruiser on the shoulder of the QEW during the OPP public awareness campaign for the new legislation Slow Down, Move Over.

## 'I wish people would be more aware of it'

#### From Page

"I wish people would be more aware of it and move over," said Townsend. "I've been telling everybody that it takes a second to move over, but it also takes a second to kill somebody. It would be better if they just move

Schmidt recalls an incident that occurred just the other day on Hwy.

"Yesterday we had a crash on the 401 where an officer was stopped behind a CAA tow truck that was hooking up a vehicle that was disabled," he said.

"He had been there for about 10 minutes when he got hit from behind, smashed the whole vehicle.

The officer has minor injuries, bumps and scrapes, stiff back and stiff neck, no hospitalization. But it could have been deadly. When the car amashed into the side of the police cat, the tow truck driver was standing beside his tow truck droking up the (disabled) car. He beard the first crash, he are to the front of his truck and then the car came and smashed his truck. "He could have been killed. It's

unbelievable."

Schmidt urges people to only stop on the side of the road if it is absolutely necessary, or to phone 911 and ask for assistance if they don't

el safe. "We will get a blocker truck, a tow truck, a service vehicle or police and give you a a little visibility or protection while you are there," said Schmidt.

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# Hundreds turn out to watch Viking ship sail

#### ANDREA TINGEY Postmedia Network

Spectators had to strain to get a good view as hundreds turned out for a look at the Viking ship that passed through the Welland Canal last Tuesday. The ship made its trek through the lock system, where hundreds

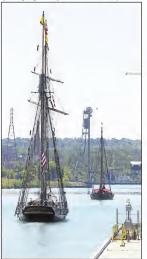
crammed into chairs, along fences and onto bleachers to snap a photo or catch a glimpse of the vessel. Onlookers watched the Draken Harald Harfagre — thought to be the largest Viking ship built in modern times - pass through Niagara on its way from

Norway to the United States. Its next stop is Ohio, where it was to stay from July 8-10 before continuing its voyage. Everyone had their own reasons

July 8-10 before continuing its voyage. Everyone had their own reasons for coming, whether it was to see the carved hull, look at the sailors or simply be transported back in time by the artifact.

Despite living near Lock 7, Antonetta Tremonte sald she hadn't watched ships travel the canal in decades, but last Tuesday she decided there was something worth seeing.

Continued on Page 23



JULIE JOCSAK/POSTMEDIA NETWORK

The Norwegian viking ship Draken Harald Harfagre followed by the tall ship The Pride of Baltimore II makes its way through the Welland Canal in St. Catharines last Tuesday.





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# **LOCALNEWS**

## Dry weather has had little impact on lake levels

#### From Page 12

remains on track for harvest in mid-September.

The dry weather has not had ipalities. an impact on lake levels, which remain where they ought to be. Niagara Region public works commissioner Ron Tripp said.

There are no immediate or foreseeable concerns with water supply levels available from Lake Erie and Lake Ontario.

That means no water use restrictions are expected to be imposed, despite the drought-

like conditions.

Tripp said it's likely been about 30 years since such

restrictions were put in place, The progress of crops when a flat rate was charged for usage prior to metered water being implemented by munic-

ronmentally and economically conscious of their water usage he added.

If a restriction were to be imposed, it would be implemented by the Region, 'but it doesn't seem realistic we would face that unless something completely unforeseen honnene"

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## **Board gets earful from taxi industry**

#### **BILL SAWCHUK** nostmedia nebuork

Owners of taxi licences in Niagara told the police board last Thursday that ending the quota system would decimate their industry.

Packing the gallery at the Nlagara police services board licencing committee meeting, they had to be admonished a number of times to quiet down so the speakers could he heard

"If you keep speaking out, I will have to ask you to leave," said board chairman Bob

Audience members responded, velling: "Shame! Shame!"

When the meeting finally settled down, one speaker after another implored the board not to end quotas. That system allows the owners and drivers to earn a living and protects consumers by providing a stable industry, the board heard.

Currently, there are 297 taxi licences issued in Niagara. Ending the quota system would mean more licences would be sold, and likely put more taxis on the streets. "If you open up the quotas, 174 people. we won't be able to survive at

all," said Louise Landry, a taxi operator from Niagara Falls who has been driving since

"The only time we make any money is in the summer as it is." After the public meeting ended, the board met privately and decided to keep the current quota system, subject

to further review next year.

Niagara's police board is responsible for bylaws that regulate business operators and drivers of vehicles-forhire such as cabs, tow trucks. limousines, sightseeing and shuttle vehicles

They have been working on overhauling their policies since ride-sharing giant Uber elbowed its way into the market last year.

At the end of July, the board voted to allow ride-hailing services such as Uber to operate in Niagara legally, under certain conditions.

It also liberalized some of the rules pertaining to taxis, including making it legal for cabs to pick up fares anywhere in the region. Previously, they could only

operate in the municipality where their licence was Among the other changes the board said it was look-

ing at was the quota system. which prompted last Thursday's meeting. Currently, there are 297 taxi licences in Niagara. Taxi companies and drivers can buy

a licence from the board for \$1,350, but the waiting list is long and currently consists of

Once someone owns a licence, they can resell it if they choose

In a city like New York, licences can cost more than \$1 million apiece. The going rate in Niagara is in the \$200,000

That's a substantial investment for an individual or company in Niagara, where the market fluctuates widely from city to city and season to

For individuals, the licence often serves as a retirement fund when he or she decides

considering changes.

Gale had to remind the audience the board was only One owner demanded the home addresses of police

Gale was not amused. to finally hang up the car "Listen, this is not a done

changes to the current system. deal." Gale said. "We are here structive criticism."

to get comments and con-One of the few people to speak against the current quota system was Corrina

board members so he could Kelly, a union steward at Censue them if they made any tral Tayl with the Teamsters Even she supports a modified quota system.

The industry in Niagara 'had to have a limit on the number of taxis to survive."

she said. She then told the board she would like to see the system changed so that only drivers

who have been on the road in Niagara for more than five years are eligible to purchase

a licence. That would keep large comnanies and well-heeled own-

ers from monopolizing the system and "enslaving" drivers, she said. bsawchuk@postmedia.com

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SUPPLIED PHOTO Members of the taxi industry pack a meeting of the Niagara police services board last Thursday.

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# **LOCALNEWS**

## Ship rare sight to be seen

#### From Page 19

"The last time I've come to watch ships go through the locks was a class trip in Grade 5 or 6; she said. "It was just the draw of seeing the ship, I just thought it was an interesting-looking ship."

The Draken Harald Harfagre was docked overnight in Port Weller, having already made stops in Iceland and Greenland on its malden voyage. Sue Vanderkwaak and her husband, Roy, are originally from Courtice, Ont.,

but were interested in seeing the local canal.
"It's our first trip to actually see the canals, and then to have boats like that

canals, and then to have boats like that coming through it's really great," she said. "It's different, unusual. We haven't

seen anything like it before."

Jim Irven was at Lock 3. A model sailboat collector, he was there to watch the Spanish galleon and Viking ship pass through.

"I'm a boat person," he said. "I've got probably 10 (models)." However, he was most interested in seeing the Viking ship. "The design of

the hull is great." he said.

Ed Jocson frequently watches boats go by at Lock 3.

"We have never seen the Viking ship

"We have never seen the Viking ship come this way, we have seen the other ships," he said. "People like to see the special ones come around." Duland Brennand. 22, was at Lock 7

to watch the ship pass.

"Honestly, I would love to hear some kind of drumming when they pass by, but I'm not getting my hopes too high," said the 22-year-old.

"It looks interesting. It's not something I've ever seen, so I don't have any point of reference for it. "I'm kind of hoping there is some

guy on there that's looking a bit mythical."

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The Norwegian Viking ship Draken Harald Harfagre makes its way through the Welland Canal.



The crew of the Pride of Baltimore II helps to tie up the boat in Lock 3.



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## Hotel chemical suspect appears in court

Police have laid additional charges against a man arrested in connection with the discovery of chemicals in a motel room in Niazara Falls two weeks

ago.

David Harrison, 43, appeared in bail court in St. Catharines last friday where he was arraigned on charges of possession of a prohibited weapon and possession of a weapon while prohibited from doing

so. He was previously changed with possession of subchances withof may be used to produce explosives. Defense oursel Andrew Burton requested an adjournment, saying there is "voluminous disclosure still outstanding." Harrison is scheduled to return to court July ISI. Last Morkoy, Negara Regional Police surrounded the USI inn on Kitchener Street. The motel was executed and a number of streets were executed and an unitary of streets.

#### Coin thief sentenced

A 19-year-old Fort Erle man who seammed \$400 in quarters from guarters from a laundromat in Fort Ere has been ordered to perform \$00 hours of community service. There's no good reason a young man like this needs to be lide, "Judge Peter Wilklies said last Friday in Ontario Court of Justice in St. Catharines. Tristen Mason was also placed on probation for 15 from this after he pleaded guilty to several charges.

including theft under \$5,000.
Assistant Crown attorney Holly
Nicele said Mason fed a \$20 bill
into the coin machine at the
laundromat and then quickly
removed it at the same time
quarters were released. She said
Mason repeated the actions a
number of times, resulting in a yield
of \$800.
Mason, affist-time offender, and an
accomplice were arrested after the

owner reviewed surveillance tapes.



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Table of the Control of Control o

## Raccoon set free

#### From Page 3

He and fellow officer Ryan Huurman tried to pull the grate loose with rope and chains, but couldn't get it to budge.

They called on the fire department

to help, and tried a number of other ways to pry it loose. "None of that was working," he

said.
"And of course, it started pound-

He said they diverted the water away from the frightened raccoon's face as they continued their efforts. A city worker was called in to help. Hoadley said they were considering calling in a tow truck company as

well to yank the grate loose when the city worker finally got it to budge. The video shows the worker smashing the ground with a large hammer, jostling the grate enough so it could be pulled free. The next step was to get the little

guy free.
They pushed his head through the hole.
"He was in there really, really

good," Hoadley said.
His guess is the raccoon climbed
up and poked its head through

the hole, but couldn't pull it back out because of the scruff and skin around its neck.

He said the raccoon is lucky it was so young, otherwise it might have broken its neck.

A trip to see a local wildlife rehabilitator determined that while its neck was a little raw from rubbing against the grate, the animal was otherwise unbarmed.

The raccoon was released near the outskirts of town, away from any

sewers.

The SPCA shared the video as well as others like it, to show what kind of work they do to help animals.

As for anyone else who sees an animal in distress, here's what they can do to help.

"Besically, just call (your) local

"Basically, just call (your) local humane society," said John Greer, executive director of the Welland SPCA.

"We would strongly discourage the general public from trying to rescue them themselves." Hoadley said every animal and

situation is different and in the end they're still wild creatures.

lbarton@postmedia.com



A young raccoon finds itself in a predicament on Canada Day as it got its head stuck in a sewer grate near Welland's Chippawa Park.



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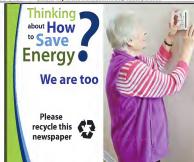
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